Suggestions for Using Writing Rubrics

Changing Rubric Scores into Numerical or Standards Scores

The on-going quest we have faced in the English Department, with regards to writing rubrics, is in determining a few items. One, should the rubric just be used as feedback for the student? Should this document be marked up (in addition to all the comments we tend to write ON the papers) and handed back to the student so he or she knows where he stands on this type of writing at this particular moment? And two, since “grades” need to be entered, somehow, how might the rubric “score” be translated into a standard score or a numerical score? These are items we continue to grapple with, but we have grappled with these for many, many years, and we wanted to pass along some concrete methods by which you may want to use writing rubrics.

1. As you read the paper, there is a strong chance that the paper will not always fall within one whole box. It is very likely that you will be circling descriptors in various columns since each part of the writing has shades of “correctness” across the columns.
   1. To translate that to a number, do you take the highest number circled?
   2. Do you take the lowest in a row?
   3. Do you “trend” the circles and see where a majority of them fall?
2. Do you report each row as its own standard category in a grade book?
   1. If so, do you take the highest? Lowest? The trend?
3. Do you try to come up with one numerical score for the whole sheet and just enter that?
   1. Do you add up the circled boxes’ values to a grand sum. Create a conversion chart where 12 (three rows’ scores x 4 as highest score) = 100.